

Week 13: Online Public Access Catalogs

April 21 – April 28

We are in the final stretch! The trees are budding, the birds are singing and nothing says spring like begging for more money for next year! Now that you are all familiar with MARC records and Sears subject headings, here's hoping you never need to deal with them. Don't you want to have a nice Online Public Access Catalog that will allow you to import impeccable records from somewhere else? Well, dare to dream, librarians.

First off, there is a wee bit of Kaplan and Riedling left to **read**. Go take a look!

This week you are going to talk to a school librarian about his or her current OPAC. (And if you are one – feel free to talk to yourself.) Consider the strengths and weaknesses of the current system. Then go **explore** Breeding's site

<http://www.librarytechnology.org/companies.pl?SID=20100411295837402&code=vend>

and choose another system and get information about it. You can call, email, check out their website - however you want to do it. Then for your **assignment**, create a proposal aimed at your district administrators to lobby for the new system. If the current system that you have turns out to be better than the new one, you can lobby against a "forced change". Make sure you are clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the different systems and that you mention to the "administration" (who might not understand library needs) why these considerations are important.

There is a class wiki for which you were sent an invitation back in February. There is a link in the sidebar of the bibliography/content wiki or you can click below. You can set up a link a new page to your name for your project, or just put a link to direct readers to your presentation if you are housing it somewhere else.

<http://lbs850fecteau.wikispaces.com/>

You can be creative with this if you like. You can use a powerpoint, make a video or a podcast, you can write a standard letter. But make sure your points are well made and your arguments show that you have researched thoroughly!

And use your blog post this week to give me the highlights of your OPAC interview. If you are using your own system write about your experience using it. If you don't have an LMS at your disposal – feel free to ask a classmate. If you are interviewed by a classmate for this project, you can skip your blog post and just put a link to their blog interview with you!

Don't forget the **discussion** I have put possible topics below.

Reading: Kaplan and Riedling 167-172, 178-181.

Exploration: Breeding's site on Library Automation Companies

<http://www.librarytechnology.org/companies.pl?SID=20100411295837402&code=vend>

Assignment: Interview a School Library Media Specialist to see what she is using for her OPAC. With what you learn in your interview develop a set of criteria for a school OPAC. With the perspective that her OPAC is your current OPAC, research a provider you think might work better from Breeding's site. Write a proposal to your district to replace the current system. Or, if the system currently in use seems to be the best possible choice, pretend that the district is trying to force a change and lobby for your current system by comparing it to the proposed new one. Needless to say, if you are a LMS currently using an OPAC, you may interview yourself. Post it to the class wiki and inform me via the assignments link in Blackboard.

<http://lbs850fecteau.wikispaces.com/>

Write in your blog about your OPAC interview or your current system and how you feel about it.

Discussion Possibilities:

K&R [p.170] discuss the idea of placing all media in the same area of the library by subject – interspersing DVDs with books, etc... What do you think of their statement - “We would like to argue that all items, when possible, should be inter-shelved with the books.” - ?

K&R [p.180] say, “Many technical people are mistrustful of library programs and either refuse to load them on to a school server or drag their feet so long it is hardly worth the effort.” This seems kind of shocking to me. Have you seen this? How is are the relationships between IT and librarians that you have observed?

Feel free to discuss anything you run into in your OPAC search, too!